



# MNSPECT

HELPING YOU COMPLY WITH THE CODE

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## INSPECTION PERSONNEL:

- Scott Qualle, Designated Building Official
- Ty Turnquist, Operations Director, Senior Commercial Plans Examiner
- Tom Richardson, Relationship Manager
- Nick Qualle, Senior Residential Plans Examiner, Field Inspector
- Thomas Krause, Field Inspector
- Derek Qualle, Rental/Field Inspector
- Dean Mau, Senior Fire Plans Examiner
- Dale Engelmann, Senior Plumbing Plans Examiner, Plumbing Inspector
- Tracy Montgomery, Office Manager
- Wendy Morrissey, Administrative Assistant
- Brandy Blauert, Operations Assistant



Happy Thanksgiving from our family to yours!

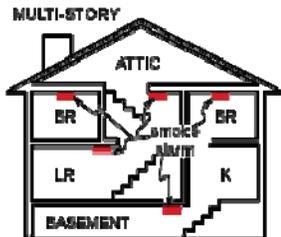
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**MNSPECT MINUTE**  
November 2015

## DON'T GET BURNED

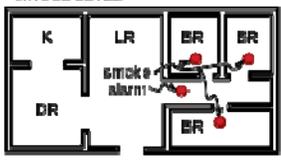
For a brief period of time, the MN State Building Code required new homes over 4,500 ft<sup>2</sup> and all new town homes to be equipped with fire sprinkler systems. In October, the court deemed the residential fire sprinkler mandate, as it pertains to one and two family dwellings, invalid. The initial drive to require fire sprinkler systems to be installed in new homes was an attempt to lower deaths and injuries to occupants and first responders, as well as reduce property damage, due to fire. It is important to remember that most new and existing homes, even if constructed during the brief time of this requirement, do not have fire sprinklers. If no sprinklers are required, what can a homeowner do to help prevent loss of life and personal property due to house fires? Here are a few of things:

- State law requires that homes be equipped with a smoke detector on each level of the home, inside each bedroom, and one outside of the sleeping rooms. **It is crucial that the batteries be checked regularly and replaced if necessary.** Money is well spent on an interconnected system that relies on the primary power from the building wiring and that has a battery back-up.
- Install gypsum board in enclosed accessible space under stairs: on walls, under-stair surface, and any soffits.
- Install gypsum board on garage wall separating house from a garage as well as the garage ceiling. If there are any holes in the existing gypsum, patch them with fire-resistant material.
- Install an attic access door that is made of gypsum or a different material that is fire-resistant.
- Remove all combustible materials that are located near the furnace, water heater, or any other gas-operated appliances.
- Ensure that sleeping rooms have operable emergency escape and rescue openings. If the windows are "stuck" shut due to limited use, water damage, paint, etc, they may hinder a quick escape. If the sill height from the floor is more than 44 inches (newer homes should not have this issue), install a platform in front of the window. Remember, if you can't get to the window due to furniture or clutter, not only will it prevent or slow down your escape, but it could injure your rescuers, who are unaware of what is on the other side of the window.
- Keep paths of egress clear of clutter and obstacles. In case of a quick exit, you don't want to be tripping over things, and your visibility may be limited by smoke. As mentioned above, rescuers will need clear paths in order to assist you and your family.
- Place fire extinguishers on each floor of your home. Have them in plain sight and know how to use them. Fire extinguishers should be located in areas that are most susceptible to fire: kitchen, garage, near fireplaces. Do not put the fire extinguisher near the most likely place a fire will start, but by the door so that you have easy access to it - you do not want to get burned while getting the extinguisher. Fire extinguishers need to be "serviced" every 12 months. Email us at [info@mnspect.com](mailto:info@mnspect.com) to request additional information on fire extinguishers.
- Address numbers on your home should be a minimum of 4" and in a color that contrasts with their background, so that they are clearly visible from the street. Their purpose is not for decoration but rather to cut down on valuable seconds when emergency personnel are trying to find you.

PLACE ONE SMOKE ALARM ON EVERY FLOOR AND SLEEPING ROOM



SINGLE LEVEL



Questions about a future project? Call us at 952-442-7520 or e-mail us at [info@mnspect.com](mailto:info@mnspect.com).

Some of the above preventions can be costly, but they are less expensive than a fire sprinkler system and could potentially save you and your family members' lives.

Remember:

- If the smoke detectors go off you may have less than one minute to escape – don't delay!
- If in doubt, get out! Don't stay to fight a fire.